

The Advertising Practitioner and the Imbuement of Al-Ghazali's Islamic Ethics Framework

Aida Mokhtar*

International Islamic University Malaysia

*Corresponding email: aidam@iium.edu.my

Abstract

The imbuement of Islamic ethics by advertising practitioners is central to the sculpturing of Islamic advertising messages. Ethical advertising encompasses several dimensions and of major focus here is ethics in relation to the advertising practitioner. The Muslim Islamic advertising practitioner has the role of forming advertising objectives that would succeed in achieving advertising effects on earth and in attaining eternal goodness in the Hereafter in line with Islamic ethics. The article applies four themes of a framework generated from Al-Ghazali's Al-Ihya' to Muslim Islamic advertising practitioners. The themes centre on the practitioners' need for understanding the ideals of a believer while conducting business activities by embracing the key concepts of vicegerency, Tawhid, Ihsan, Islam, Iman and wasatiyyah in repelling moral myopia that underscores the practitioners' difficulty in identifying ethical issues. The Muslim practitioner who recognises and embraces the Islamic purpose of life would use Islam as a holistic guide in life including when making decisions for advertising production.

Keywords: Advertising, Ethics, Islam, Al-Ghazali, Al-Ihya'

Pengamal Pengiklanan dan Penerimaan Terhadap Kerangka Etika Islam Al-Ghazali

Abstrak

Penerimaan etika Islam oleh pengamal pengiklanan adalah penting bagi merumus mesej pengiklanan Islam. Pengiklanan beretika merangkumi beberapa dimensi dan fokus makalah ini adalah terhadap penerimaannya dalam kalangan pengamal pengiklanan. Pengamal pengiklanan Islam mempunyai peranan dalam membentuk objektif pengiklanan yang akan berjaya dalam mencapai kesan pengiklanan di dunia dan kebaikan abadi di Akhirat selaras dengan etika Islam. Artikel ini menggunakan empat tema dari suatu kerangka yang dihasilkan dari Al-Ihya', karya Al-Ghazali untuk pengamal pengiklanan Islam Muslim. Tema-tema ini memberi perhatian kepada keperluan para pengamal untuk memahami nilai murni seorang mukmin semasa menjalankan aktiviti perniagaan dengan mengamalkan konsep-konsep utama kekhalifahan, tawhid, ihsan, Islam, iman dan wasatiyyah dalam menangkis miopia moral yang menggariskan kesukaran para pengamal dalam mengenal pasti isu-isu etika. Pengamal pengiklanan Islam yang mengiktiraf dan menerima tujuan hidup Islam akan menggunakan Islam sebagai panduan holistik dalam kehidupan termasuk ketika membuat keputusan untuk menghasilkan iklan.

Kata Kunci: Pengiklanan, Etika, Islam, Al-Ghazali, Al-Ihya'

Introduction

Advertising ethics is a major topic that needs close scrutiny. There is an assortment of outlooks on advertising embracing both positive and negative facets. Advertising's visibility and potential to persuade consumers to make a purchase make it prone to criticisms (Ogilvy, 2007). Advertising is often condemned for creating false wants and for encouraging the production and consumption of products that do not fulfil human needs (Dyer, 1982). It also has the potential to make people greedy, materialistic and wasteful through the repetition of advertisements that represent success through excessive materialistic attainment. But, advertising is not all bad as it also helps develop the consumer culture

by communicating information about products to potential customers without which it would not be possible for them to be well-informed (Moriarty, Mitchell, & Wells, 2015). Dyer (1982) acknowledges that the supporters of advertising claim it brings many economic benefits, contributes to a society's well-being and raises the standards of living. As a staunch supporter of advertising, Phillips (1997) believes that the capitalist economic system is to be blamed for negative social effects, not advertising. Ogilvy (2007) is more of an optimist when discussing advertising whose economic contribution gives him some comfort in creating advertisements. He strongly refutes any advertising negativity as regulations that monitor advertisements ensure they are truthful and non-manipulative, making advertisements sufficiently ethical. Advertising has a reputation for being good and bad for society as obviously seen in the many roles it takes. For Islamic advertising to take place, Muslim entrepreneurs have to set up businesses that conduct itself in a halal (lawful) manner that is in line with Shari'ah law (Ramadani, Dana, Ratten, & Tahiri, 2015). Islamic advertisements are thus ethical advertisements that use the definition of ethics according to the Qur'an and Sunnah. It is imperative to apply Islamic advertising ethics in Malaysia on the Muslim audience as the country is a Muslim majority country whose official religion is Islam.

Advertising and Ethics

The Qur'an does not prohibit advertising and the promotion of the Islamic faith is evident in advertisements distributed in North Africa, the Levant, the Gulf States and Middle Eastern states (Al-Makaty, Turbergen, Whitlow, & Boyd, 1996). Advertising is a form of communication and for it to be ethical through the Islamic lens, it should abide by Islamic ethics. Therefore, it is important to have a greater understanding of ethics before applying Al-Ghazali's framework for business ethics to advertising.

In Islam, ethics refers to the knowledge of moral principles (or akhlaq) or moral values that guide an individual or a group in the form of an association, occupation and others (Hamat & Shuhari, 2017). Islam is a way of life and the Islamic ethical system pervades all spheres of

human life (Tilt & Rahin, 2015). Islamic ethics for advertising could be related to Islamic business ethics that is denoted as the moral principles recommended by the Qur'an and Sunnah (Hadith or sayings of Prophet Mohammad [SAW]) for use in business activities (Abuznaid, 2009). Islam permeates life and as a Muslim advertising practitioner, it has to be used as guidance in one's advertising affairs or he or she will be questioned on the knowing neglect by the Creator. Both Islamic and Western literature ponder on the use of ethics in advertising and this is not skewed solely to Islam.

Ethics Pervades Advertising

Advertising and morality are intertwined. Morality pervades different advertising components (Drumwright, 2012):

In traditional media advertising, the onus of ethical decision making is primarily on three parties: (1) the creator of the advertising (e.g., the advertising practitioner), (2) the message sponsor or source (e.g., the client), and (3) the channel, the conveyor of the message (e.g., the mass media). Some advertising practitioners have moral myopia that prevents ethical issues from coming into focus (p. 464).

Another article suggests that the academia and advertising industry consult one another regarding ethics in advertising (Drumwright & Murphy, 2009). The writers recommend advertising ethics to take place through the monitoring of the media for ethical practices, forming of advertising agencies with ethical organisational cultures, giving ethical treatment to employees and conducting corporate social responsibility activities. They also believe that bigger agencies have greater responsibility, agency websites have to put ethics as top priority, academicians should include ethics in textbooks, exercise the co-creation of meaning between experts and their students, and address privacy issues of audiences.

For Thorson and Rodger (2012), ethics has to fit into the advertising process circle that outlines advertising components that define advertising

such as advertising organizations (advertising agencies, corporations, regulatory organizations, self-regulatory organizations, professional or scholarly associations), contexts (historical, business, ethical, legal), message sources, media channels, devices, audiences or message receivers, and intended and unintended effects. For them, intended effects comprise of purchase, intention to purchase, attitude to the advertisement and brand, memory, attention, involvement, immediate vs. delayed, unintended (materialism) and behaviour change beyond purchase. Unintended effects comprise of materialism, purchase of what is unneeded, unhealthy behaviours and miscomprehension. The common denominator for all the components is the advertising message.

Santilli (1983) claims that immoral advertising could be determined in four ways: advertising of harmful or dangerous products, immoral services, advertising of immoral messages and advertising that uses media that support immoral groups. In relation to this definition, it could be determined that ethical advertising is determined by its promotion of beneficial products, incorporation of ethical messages and use of ethical media.

Ethical advertising from the Islamic perspective entails that Islamic advertising is a form of da'wah highlighting the following: the key principle of Islamic advertising is enjoining good and forbidding evil; the key Muslim stakeholders in advertising production (including Islamic advertising practitioners) are dai' and embrace the Islamic worldview; Islamic advertising is produced with ikhlas (sincerity), using Surah Al-Fatihah and principles of faith (Iman, Islam and Ihsan); and, it uses standards of Islamic advertising with the main objective of pleasing Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) (Mokhtar & Samsudin, 2015). Of great focus in this article is the ethical role of Muslim Islamic advertising practitioners in the production of advertising.

Ethics and Advertising Practitioners

The problem with advertising practitioners is that they are perceived by respondents as having a less ethical profession compared to nursing in the 16th Gallup poll (4-11 December, 2017) measuring Americans'

Ratings of Honesty and Ethical Standards in Professions (Brenan, 2017). For Brenan, in the Gallup poll on 22 professions, advertising practitioners were ranked 19th and rated 49 percent for being “Average” compared to nurses who were ranked first and rated 82 percent for being “Very high” or “High” in terms of abiding by professional standards. Another study indicates that advertising agency executives face dilemmas in making ethical decisions as they have to treat their clients fairly and equitably, in terms of creating honest, non-misleading, socially appreciative advertisements; creating advertisements for unhealthy products; handling suppliers, vendors and media fairly; treating employees and management of agency fairly; treating employees, management of the agency and other ad agencies fairly (Hunt & Chonko, 1987). More needs to be done by advertising practitioners from the ethical aspect as this would result in ethical advertising. An Islamic ethical code of conduct should be formed to guide Muslim Islamic advertising practitioners as they play a part in producing advertisements that would influence messages.

Is it possible for practitioners to combine ethics and advertising? It seems challenging to discuss ethics in light of advertising that has deadlines, demanding client, and mandatory short-term results (Drumwright, 2012). With the implications of unethical advertising on audiences, ethical advertising practices and content should be practitioners’ top priority. There should be an equilibrium struck between demanding deadlines and expectations for short term results from clients and moral standards for ethical advertisements to be born. The Machiavellianism approach in politics that supports the idea of maintaining power using any means should be frowned upon. Islam opposes the idea of allowing unlawful means to achieve results. This stance is reinforced by the Islamic principle that believers should be enjoining good and forbidding evil. The key principle of Islamic advertising is ‘enjoining good and forbidding evil’ as mentioned by the Qur’an in Surah Al-Imran (3:110): “Ye are the best of Peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta’ala)” (Mokhtar & Samsudin, 2015, pp. 11-12).

Using untruthful means to cheat customers is not acceptable in Islam as merchants should be guided by ethics and this could be applied to advertising that is used by them to promote products. It was narrated that Abu Hurairah said, "The Messenger of Allah (SAW) passed by a man who was selling food. He put his hand in it and saw that there was something wrong with it. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, 'He is not one of us who cheats'" (Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 3, Book 12, Hadith 2224: Grade Sahih [Darussalam]).

The advertising practitioner should realise that his or her moral development affects advertising messages. A person's moral development would affect his or her ethical sensitivity, decision-making and behaviour (Drumwright, 2012). With Muslim Islamic advertising practitioners, the Qur'an and Sunnah should be used to guide all of life as proclaimed by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in his final sermon, and we should apply this advice to the production of advertisements by Muslim Islamic advertising practitioners to Muslim audiences.

Ethical standards should be entrenched in an agency's code of conduct hence they should be treated with great earnestness by practitioners. For instance, the code of conduct appeared to have been upheld seriously by the Ogilvy advertising agency founded by British born David Ogilvy in 1948. Practitioners are expected to adhere to the agency's code of conduct as in the case of the firing of its South East Asia Chief Creative Officer (CCO), Ajab Samrai for misconduct in September 2018 (Carroll, 2018) and Worldwide Chief Creative Officer, Tham Khai Meng for misconduct in July 2018 (Coffee, 2018). Although the news did not specify the type of misconduct committed by both practitioners, they were suffice to alert us to the fact that practitioners should pay serious attention to adhering to an agency's code of conduct and practise the highest standard of professionalism.

Practitioners may encounter moral myopia. This means that they have difficulty seeing ethical issues at various levels of intensity ranging from blindness to short-sightedness (Drumwright & Murphy, 2009). Those with the wrong perception are said to have distorted moral vision and

use rationalisations to form erroneous perceptual understandings of the situation such as by thinking that consumers are intelligent and cannot be led off course by unethical advertisements, advertising images reflect social reality, laws should drive advertising not ethics, the first amendment ensures freedom of speech hence advertising is defined by this, moral myopia distorts moral vision due to the agency's proximity to the client's business and corporate culture, and when out of sight then ethical issues are out of mind.

Moral muteness, other than moral myopia, is also an issue where practitioners remain silent and avoid opposing moral issues in person or in organisations (Drumwright & Murphy, 2009). There are four classes of moral muteness identified by the study: (1) compartmentalisation is when work life standards and personal life standards are separated in the case when the former are offensive but the latter are not; (2) the client is always right meaning that practitioners do not want to say no to clients; (3) ethics is bad for business and, (4) Pandora's box syndrome that represents practitioners who shy away from critically examining issues (Drumwright & Murphy, 2004). Not all practitioners examined by the researchers demonstrated moral muteness. There were also practitioners who saw and spoke on moral issues as part of a process: the identification of the moral issue, communication about the moral issue, and the decision to say 'no' to the client and peers on moral issues. There are variations from informants about ethical issues in the workplace with regard to advertising with selective ethical concerns by applying ethics to female audiences only and by having a restricted ethical lens (Zayer & Coleman, 2015).

Advertising ethics should also be explained in accordance with the principles of Islamic communication for the Muslim audience. The micro-level theory of ethics speaks of the personal moral development of practitioners in advertising that will influence their sensitivity to ethics when making decisions and behaving (Drumwright, 2012). The following paragraphs deliberate on the salient expectations of the advertising practitioner from the Islamic perspective.

Al-Ghazali's Framework and Advertising Practitioners

The well-known philosopher Al-Ghazali's Al-Ihya' refers to the ethics of earning that provides insights on contemporary business ethics (Sidani & Al Ariss, 2015). The philosopher pioneered rational thinking among traditionalists and this allowed for more application-oriented approaches rather than literal comprehension of scripture representative of traditional religious thought. Sidani and Al Ariss generated four main themes from Al-Ihya' in relation to contemporary business ethics: knowledge before actions; maximisation of profits is not a virtue; justice and care for stakeholders; and Ihsan, a Precursor to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)? These themes could be applied to advertising practitioners and the ethics that they could be used as guidance:

Knowledge before Actions

This first theme generated from Al-Ghazali's Al-Ihya' entails that the path to happiness commences with knowledge and actions (Sidani & Al Ariss, 2015). Acquiring knowledge is important for someone who is earning a living, otherwise you may commit great sin by not knowing how to enter contracts beyond avoiding usury and by getting into unlawful partnerships. Business people must be knowledgeable of rightful Islamic practices before embarking on their business activities. Comparably, the Muslim advertising practitioner has to be knowledgeable and reminded of the definition and significance of Islamic ethics and how to apply this to advertising practices when producing advertisements. Knowledge of Islamic ethics could be derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and used to develop individuals and society (Rahim, 2014). Islamic ethics and advertising knowledge could be combined to realise the application of Islam in advertising. Al-Ghazali underscores the importance of intertwining revelation with reason and the former having greater emphasis over the latter (Sidani & Al Ariss, 2015).

Why is Islamic ethics important to know in advertising? It would help shape individuals to be good people who would carry out their responsibilities well as vicegerents of Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) on earth (Awang, 2014). Agencies should ensure that the practitioner receives constant knowledge of Islamic ethics through training, tadhkirah sessions, continuous education, proper code of conduct and the like.

When the lack of understanding of Islam is found, the likelihood of unethical advertisements produced could be the outcome. In the case of advertisements that have represented beauty using fair skin, this could be attributed to unethical decision-making that could have been prevented if the practitioner were aware of the disfavour in including racist or ethnocentric messages that underscore the superiority of a race or culture over another (Samovar, Porter, McDaniel, & Roy, 2014). In relation to this, a knowledgeable Muslim practitioner would be aware that Islam upholds one's piety and good actions above one's skin colour. This is evident from the final sermon of Prophet Muhammad (SAW):

All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over a white except by piety and good action.

The influence of advertising practitioners on messages and in promoting Islamic identities is obvious. Advertising practitioners have the means of reinforcing and creating transnational identities such as the "modern Islamic consumer" (Drumwright & Kamal, 2016) and the prolonged viewing of television could fashion people's perception of reality as espoused by the cultivation theory (Gerbner, 1998). With the possible effects that advertising brings, it is clear that practitioners should conduct themselves ethically and should be knowledgeable of Islamic ethics for use in advertising products. Knowing the purpose of life, the importance of good moral character, Tawhid, and that Muslims are vicegerents in Islam are all principles generated from revelation and applying them to advertising knowledge focused on reason is key for Muslim advertising practitioners to produce ethical advertising.

Knowing the Purpose of Life

A Muslim practitioner of ethical advertising should have knowledge of the purpose of life in Islam and embrace it as part of his or her moral

development. This would ensure that decisions on ethical advertising production would be in light of his or her obedient submission to the Supreme Being. This should come easily as every human being is born with an inherent consciousness of God as indicated in Surah Al-Araf (7: 172-173) (Philips, 2006):

And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] - lest you should say on the day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware." Or [lest] you say, "It was only that our fathers associated [others in worship] with Allah before, and we were but descendants after them. Then would You destroy us for what the falsifiers have done?"

There is the inborn belief that Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) defined the purpose of humankind's creation in Surah Adh-Dharyat (51:56): "I have not created the Jinn and humankind except to worship Me." It is clear here that the key reason why humankind was created is to worship Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala), meaning that we need to give 'obedient submission to the Will of God' (Mokhtar & Samsudin, 2015; Philips, 2006). Muslims are to worship Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) as this is key to success in life on earth and the Hereafter as demonstrated by Adam and Eve's banishment from Paradise for disobeying Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) (Philips, 2006).

In order to conduct business or advertising in an ethical manner accepted by Islam, one has to also have good moral character encouraged by knowledge in Islam by emulating Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Muslim Islamic advertising practitioners should know and believe in the importance of having good moral character when producing advertisements.

Knowing the Meaning and Importance of Good Moral Character

In Islam, the best Muslim advertising practitioner in producing ethical advertisements would be the person with good moral character akin to Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The Sunnah is important to refer to as it is an interpretation of the Qur'an by the Prophet (SAW). 'Aishah (SAW) said, "The conduct of the Prophet (SAW) was entirely according to the Qur'an" (Riyad As Salihin, Book 19, Hadith No. 1847). Abu Hurayra reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "I was sent to perfect good character" (Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Book 14, Hadith No. 273: Grade Sahih [Al-Albani]).

When we relate Al-Ghazali's impression on having knowledge of best Islamic practices prior to doing business, we could add to this by mentioning that having knowledge of how the Prophet (SAW) conducted himself ethically while doing business is also imperative to Muslim Islamic advertising practitioners for a better illustration of what ought to be done. The Prophet (SAW) was known as As-Siddiq (the truthful) and Al-Ameen (the trustworthy) and had core values guiding his character and behaviour like truthfulness, integrity, trustworthiness, justice, benevolence, kindness and sabr (patience) mentions Beekun (2012).

Muslim Islamic advertising practitioners believe that Islam's focus on good character is greatly emphasized as Abu Ad-Dardh narrated that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "Nothing is placed on the Scale that is heavier than good character. Indeed the person with good character will have attained the rank of the person of fasting and praying" (Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Book 27, Hadith 109: Grade Hasan [Darussalam]). Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "The most complete of the believers in faith, is the one with the best character among them. And the best of you are those who are best to your women" (Jami' at-Tirmidhi, 1162, Book 12, Hadith 17: Grade Hasan [Darussalam]).

Character influences communication. This should be understood by Muslim Islamic advertising practitioners. One of the Islamic communication principles is to practise what you preach (Hussain, 2009). The Prophet (SAW) was called Al-Ameen before he became a prophet and was an

example for others to follow without which it would have been detrimental in the propagation of Islam. This principle of Islamic communication could also be applied to advertising practitioners. Practising what you preach is essential for the production of ethical advertising messages. The Qur'an mentions its importance, "O you who believe! Why say ye that which ye do not. Grievously hateful is it in the sight of Allah that ye say which ye do not" (Surah Al-Saff, 61:2-3). Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) despises the conduct of those who on all occasions do not associate their actions to their words. A Muslim Islamic advertising practitioner would recognize and practice his or her role on this earth as vicegerents of Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala).

Knowing They are Vicegerents

Muslim practitioners of Islamic advertising should be aware or be made aware that they are vicegerents whose job involves protecting the earth. It is stated in the Qur'an that Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) will put on the earth vicegerents or successive authorities (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:30). Vicegerency (khalīfatullah), unity of God (tawḥīd), god-consciousness (iḥsan) and others make up the fundamental principles of the well-being of a Muslim and the sustainability of his or her life (Mohd Amin, Ahmad, & Rahim, 2018). The writers also claim that as a servant of God and His vicegerent, man should worship Him and take care of the universe with sincerity. With this, the Muslim advertising practitioner should see himself or herself as the keeper of the universe and ensure that advertising is done in accordance with the idea of taking care of the earth. Muslims believe that possession of wealth is not in its entirety and that they are only trustees of property whose ownership belongs to Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) with businesses managed through the divine mandate by Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) and trust of stakeholders according to his or her free will but still abiding by the Shari'ah (Tilt & Rahin, 2015). This imposes the ethical obligation upon the Muslim advertising practitioner who is to know and believe in his or her vicegerency and carry out the necessary obligations with this role in mind. Practitioners should not only understand their role as vicegerents but also treat consumers not solely as consumers but as vicegerents of Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) (2:30, 6:165) contrary to conventional consumerism which views consumers

firmly in the material context (Haque, Shafiq, & Maulan, 2017). The idea of associating advertising with social responsibility is also highlighted in Western literature. Advertising should transform from being in the marriage of merely culture and business to having a more critical, ethical and socially responsible role in the world (Deuze, 2016).

As a vicegerent of Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala), man is prohibited from destroying or wasting Allah's (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) resources as evidently practised by the first ruler of the Islamic state after the Prophet (SAW), Abu Bakr, who sent an army on an expedition with orders to the army leader not to kill people or vegetation indiscriminately (Alserhan, 2017). The role of advertising is thus to uphold the notion of being socially responsible by offering products and messages that would benefit the society in an Islamic way, protecting the earth, humans and animals alike. Ethical advertising goes beyond meeting objectives related to products as it also relates to the bigger picture of social responsibility in making people's lives better.

Knowing and Believing in Tawhid

Attaining knowledge before conducting business including advertising entails that Muslim Islamic advertising practitioners must know of the concept of Tawhid and inculcate it in their lives and advertising. Its salience is apparent as the first basic principle of Islam that is the belief in the existence of Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) as the only God and the Prophethood of Muhammad (SAW). Tawhid could be applied to the understanding of unity for humankind and in business transactions. An ethical economic and financial system would develop by inculcating virtues that are key such as acknowledging unity of creation, striving for justice, preservation of rights, sanctity of contracts, truthfulness and trustworthiness and avoiding vices (Iqbal & Mirakhor, 2017). The concept is derived from comprehending the effect of "lā ilāha illa 'llāh", encompassing the belief that there is no other God but the One who is the Creator of everyone and everything resulting in the Oneness or Unity of creation and thus, Oneness or Unity of humanity is associated with ethical behaviour (Din, 2017). The idea of Oneness or Unity is also translated as a single criterion in a person's business activities

consequently contributing to high standards in managing resources in view of fairness and transparency in transactions (Zakaria, Ahmad, Salleh, Hasbullah, & Thoarlim, 2017). With Tawhid, there will be greater focus given to the idea of a single God and of unity and integration in achieving excellence when advertising.

The unity of copy and visual, the unity of a team of stakeholders producing advertisements or in terms of the artistic meaningfulness of advertising that gives creative advertising a better purpose are underscored. It would also provide practitioners better focus that they should put pleasing Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) first and not equate Him with any other being.

Maximization of Profits is not a Virtue

The second theme generated from Al-Ihya' points out that the extensive maximization of profits in business is not a virtue (Sidani & Al Ariss, 2015). Al-Ghazali discusses working and earning a living for sustenance for his or her livelihood without meeting the goals of extravagance or unnecessary savings. The philosopher also underscores that people who conduct business should not be dependent on others for their livelihood and be distracted from praying. According to him, Muslims should give primary consideration to praying and achieving eternal goodness in the Hereafter.

The hybrid of humanitarianism and commercialism and the equilibrium between spiritual and material affairs are underscored by several scholars (Alserhan, 2017; Haque et al., 2017; Kamali, 2015). Focus should be given to fairness, mutual acceptance between buyer and seller, and the balance between duties to Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) and business transactions including advertising. Practising the middle path or wasatiyyah has been designated to Muslims (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:143) and should be practised in taaruf or building relations with others, in recognizing reasonable differences in agreement (ikhtilaf) in interpretation, in dialogue (hiwar) and cooperation (ta'awun) among people for goals that are beneficial, in religiosity and practice of duties, customary practice ('urf) and financial and business transactions that should uphold fair exchange according to the Shari'ah (Kamali, 2016). Balance ought to be

sought in embracing the middle path as Islam requires that sellers strike an equilibrium between profit and social responsibility, commercialism and humanitarianism without making profit through unethical ways such as offering products that do not fulfil the promises made (Alserhan, 2017) through advertising.

For peaceful co-existence in striking the middle path, Islam encourages that a price be fixed so that the buyer and the seller are agreeable underscoring the spirit that sellers have the obligation of serving the community and restricting the focus on themselves (Haque et al., 2017). There is always balance that needs to be achieved when advertising for profit-making so that it is not guided by greed and be extremely focused on the self. As such, the middle path should be applied by Muslim Islamic advertising practitioners in ensuring that the ideal hybrids are met in all dimensions of advertising and by putting Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) first.

Justice and Care for Stakeholders

The third theme is justice and care for stakeholders (Sidani & Al Ariss, 2015). Al-Ghazali mentioned that for someone to do business, you need to do more than adhere to the Shari'ah that is Islamic law, by applying the important rule: do unto others what you want others to do unto you. The philosopher also mentioned that it would be good for the seller to have these considerations: first, practise no exaggerations when selling, second, show defects of commodity sold, third, be truthful in meeting specifications and fourth, ask for a fair price. The idea of fairness and truthfulness in business transactions should be emphasized by Muslim Islamic advertising practitioners. Hakim bin Hizam (SAW) reported that:

The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: "Both parties in a business transaction have a right to annul it so long as they have not separated; and if they tell the truth and make everything clear to each other (i.e., the seller and the buyer speak the truth, the seller with regard to what is purchased, and the buyer with regard to the money) they will be blessed in their transaction, but if they conceal

anything and lie, the blessing on their transaction will be eliminated” (Riyad as-Salihin, Book 1, Hadith 59, Bukhari and Muslim).

The idea of considering other stakeholders, especially the buyer, is upheld by some practitioners underscoring their use of the moral lens. Practitioners examined have utilised three forms of narratives to depict themselves as morally sound through their contribution of work for the common good by labelling themselves as moral people who are concerned about others, supporting the moral dimension of their work through the fashioning of meaningful advertisements and the strategic-driven narrative accentuating their moral worth by framing their work as assisting consumers (Cohen & Dromi, 2018). Here, it is apparent that stakeholders play a role in determining the moral dimension of advertising by thinking of the implication of their actions unto consumers and by being concerned about their needs.

Ihsan, a Precursor to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)?

The fourth theme is by injecting Ihsan that embraces doing good to the other party beyond doing good by law (Sidani & Al Ariss, 2015). Al-Ghazali mentions six ways to attain Ihsan through business transactions: by avoiding excess, by accepting a lower-than-usual price if the potential buyer is facing hardship, by tolerating payment delays, by clearing debts of the debtor before maturity, by nullifying a transaction if the other party wants to opt out and by selecting to do a business that is needed in society. Passion for doing good is resonated through advertising production through the application of Ihsan. Hadith Jibril is a famous Hadith that focuses on three levels of religion: Islam, Iman and Ihsan – Islam is about obeying the teachings of Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta’ala); Iman is about strengthening one’s beliefs and values while Ihsan encompasses the belief that Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta’ala) is watching one’s actions (Ismaeel & Blaim, 2012) thus the focal need for the advertising practitioner is to ensure His happiness.

Advertising agencies have the responsibility of helping others who are facing hardship and this is defined through their CSR activities. CSR

can also be good for the clients as they combine the ideas of promoting products and doing good for others. Proctor and Gamble's detergent, Tide, is used in its Loads of Hope campaign, a community outreach programme that supplies clean clothes to victims of disasters.

Conclusion

A perfect moral vision in Islamic advertising constitutes the notion of advertising production with Islamic ethics. The Qur'an and Sunnah are sources of Islamic communication principles that constitute Islamic ethics or codes of moral behaviour. With the growing Muslim market, it is essential for advertisements targeted to them to be in a form which is acceptable to Islam. Moral myopia should be discarded by advertising practitioners in favour of a perfect moral vision in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah. The four themes generated from Al-Ghazali's *Al-Iyha'* which are knowledge before actions, justice and care for customers, no virtue in inflated profit maximization, and Ihsan, a Precursor to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) could be utilised in Islamic advertisements in view of attaining success on earth and the Hereafter for Muslim Islamic advertising practitioners.

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